

What the Bells Tell

By Lauren McCall

The clappers swung stiffly back and forth
Through the rays of a blue sky

Sheltered in the steeple
Bells by their many friends
Lifelong friends
Coming and going
Swinging back and forth at their
Acquainted times

The exasperated pastor summoned
Three bells tolled
But it wasn't noon
It wasn't to warn
Or a toll of celebration

But toil carried in the wind

It had begun
Just as it began
Many times before
"But what?
What?" asked Time.
What toil could be carried in the wind?
What could Time unravel and know?

Maybe it could be heard in the words
Of the comrades so acquainted
They could finish each other's sentences
With people coming and going in the chapel below
No mind to their neighbor
Forgetting the feet and the hands

The bells so different from life below
Each one saying a word in a sequential line
Echoing and blending into each other
Until the sky was lit up with tinkling, and pealing chimes

An applause

Up till a resonant bong
Reverberated through the air to the sanctuary underneath

Like an auscultation of the spiritual body
The head was fine
The arms were fine
But if you listened carefully you could hear the heart murmur